

First Year Medical Students Get A Taste Of Work-Life Balance In The Ottawa Valley As PRH Hosts Community Week 2018

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PEMBROKE – Recently, the Pembroke Regional Hospital played host to 12 first-year Medical students from the University of Ottawa as part of Community Week 2018.

Coordinated by the Eastern Regional Medical Education Program (ERMEP), Community Week is an initiative that allows first-year Medical students to experience medical practice in rural medicine, as it can often differ greatly from that in urban centres.

Through this experience, it is hoped that the students will consider returning to rural communities for their third and fourth year rotations, then again for their residency and ultimately that they may consider a rural community when setting up their practice.

“I loved how open and warm the community of Pembroke was to a bunch of students who had come to observe and learn,” said David Rispman of Ottawa U. “I really enjoyed the opportunity to experience diverse care. I felt that many physicians went above and beyond their duties as supervisors to provide as much insight and help to me as a student.”

Mr. Rispman added that he was surprised to see how relaxed and flexible rural practice in Pembroke was. “Clinicians were not limited by large systems but were open to working with people, across departments to develop the optimal approaches to treatment that were not necessarily the result of following a rigid protocol or guideline. Patient care was clearly prioritized,” he said.

Medical Affairs Coordinator Nancy Schroeder said Pembroke Regional Hospital has served as a Community Week host site for over a decade and earned an award from ERMEP in 2011 for the quality of experience it offers to students.

With the assistance of Medical Affairs staff member Rita Amodeo who assisted with logistics and made sure everyone was taken care of and Dr. Amanda Williamson, physician lead for all Medical students and residents at PRH, the week which ran from May 27th to 31st was packed full of learning opportunities in every clinical department and marked the first time the students had contact with real patients.

For Gagan Sambhi that was one of the best things about the week. “I worked in Dr. Ali Shoughary’s ophthalmology clinic for the majority of the week, and we saw a tremendous amount of patients. I was able to talk with the patients, and participate in examining their eyes. From the sheer amount of patients we saw, I

can definitely say that I am comfortable in identifying a cataract in a patient! In addition to this, I really enjoyed exploring the City of Pembroke. There is so much to do in this city, and I am definitely looking forward to coming back soon!"

In addition to ophthalmology, Ms. Schroeder said that physicians representing almost every specialty were involved in Community Week including those in anaesthesia, emergency medicine, the Family Medicine Teaching Unit, the hospitalist program, internal medicine, obstetrics, stroke prevention, surgery/orthopaedics and radiology. She added that the professional staff also scheduled their Grand Rounds session in the same week so that the students could participate.

Along with the pairing of students with physicians throughout the week, there were also a number of interactive group activities designed to teach various skills such as Hand Scrubbing for the OR with Dr. Williamson and bone repair with orthopaedic surgeon Dr. Chris de Jesus where students had the opportunity to use specialized equipment from Zimmer Biomet in order to repair realistic broken bones.

And when they weren't working, Medical Affairs arranged for several community-based experiences for the students in order to get a taste of the community. These included a batch cooking lesson at Pembroke's Little Things Canning Company and an afternoon white water rafting at Wilderness Tours.

For Lolade Shipeolu, the time spent at Wilderness Tours was a highlight. "I absolutely loved white water rafting. It was my first time rafting and it was such a memorable experience. Rafting pushed me to step out of my comfort zone and cultivated a team bonding experience amongst myself and my colleagues."

Of her experience at PRH, Miss Lolade said she was "extremely impressed" by the physicians. "The physicians were down to earth, collegial, wonderful teachers and good care-providers. I especially appreciated their willingness to share their growth and life philosophy with us as this was really inspiring."

Evgeniya Vishnyakova echoed her colleague's comments saying that she learned a lot in just one week.

"There is so much overlap and collaboration between specialties. The hospital is very tight-knit and people are looking out for each other. Everyone is there to help out to the best of their ability, and patient care is truly integrated and shared between all the workers. Physicians and nurses are involved in all aspects of patient care, not just those immediately within their department."

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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